BILL DAIDY'S CHAPTER

By ROBERT F. HOFFMAN.

It is a feature of the glad, free life of this republic that every man is entitled to an opinion on everything under the sun, and, within wide limits, is entitled to the unrestricted expression of such opinion.

Bill Daidy is one of those who believe there is good in the large exercise of that privilege, although of late years he has added caution to candor.

In the old days he came in off his engine, loaded with the usual accumulation of griefs over the shortcomings of the roundhouse, which are apt to loom large in the long watches of the night run.

He gradually grew the habit of closing his regular harangue to the roundhouse foreman with a sort of peroration which summed up the real or imaginary derelictions of everybody connected with the road, from call-boy to president.

In an effort to break the flow of Bill's rough eloquence the roundhouse foreman unwittingly set Bill's feet upon the path that led upward—downward, Bill laughingly insists sometimes.

"Bill, why in thunder don't you write a book?" said the long-suffering foreman, when Bill had become more than usually aggressive in his none too gentle impeachments. "You are sure wasting your talent on an engine."

Bill glared for a moment before he was able to let down the pressure of road management which he had mentally assumed, and then, as the recollection of a purchase he had recently made for his growing son flashed across his mind, he gave way to a slow grin and said:

"Blamed if I don't believe that's a good idea, Ballard. Maybe I'll just go you a chapter, when my boy gets fit with his machine."

So, Daidy, in his evenings at home, took to rehearsing his daily griefs to the boy, who laboriously hammered them out of the typewriter into grotesques of composition and the printer's art.

Daidy "dictated" and "revised," "killed copy" and "edited," although he did not know it in those terms, and after many days what he had grown to call "The Chapter" was finished, decked out with border lines that fairly exhausted the resources of the boy and the eighty-odd characters of the machine.

Bill gloated over it for a week of nights, and then liked it so well that he decided to have it all done over again, in order that he might not only supply Ballard, but also send carbon copies of it surreptitiously to the superintendent of motive power, the division superintendent, and—holy of holies—the general manager.

The superintendent of motive power duly received his copy, threw it in the waste basket, and remarked casually, "Bill!"

He liked Bill, but not Bill's too free excoriations.

The division superintendent read his copy and, laughing, pigeonholed it for future use in letting down the pressure of the superintendent of motive power when next they should lock horns over engine failures.

The general manager took up his copy from its personal cover and read it from start to finish, as follows:

Chapter One.

If this don't fit your case, you get a clearance card right here. The board is out for others.

When you build an engine and want the most results and don't care what kind, fix yourself with a lot of discouraged draftsmen, and, for chief, get a good wrangler that talks into his whiskers and don't decide much.

Tell them fellows, at the start, that you put them into that cheese-box office to stay, and they can't break out onto the road to see an engine do business, noways.

Don't pay any of them too much. They are working on paper, and you can easily fix the engine after we get it.

Hire a lot of master mechanics that know all about sawmills. There ain't none around here, but you can see them running in the woods if you take a ride with me. They will be ready to lay up your new engine when it comes out.

Fix up boiler steel specifications that you know are O. K., and then let the purchasing agent bluff you into taking something better but cheaper; he can prove it. That will sure give a lift, once in a while, to some of us fellows that's a little slow about circulating in the scenery, and it will make things brisk in the boiler shop. Them fellows need work. They are too strong to rest nights.

Use hammered engine frames. If I was a track man I'd like to be able to put my hand on a busted weld and say, "Them's it," after the engine jumped the track and got pulled out of a borrow-pit. The dispatcher won't care, if she don't block the track. It makes work for the blacksmiths.

Fix your spring-rigging so, when it breaks, the equalizer will hit, point down, in the track. Gives the engine a better start when she jumps. She will go farther and everything had ought to be made to go as far as it can.

Truck-pedestal binder-bolts should set low enough to rip up a frosty plank crossing. It gives the engines a good name as goers. One nut's enough. Two stay on too well.

Put your driving-box wedge-bolts in a safe deposit box behind the driving wheels. Somebody might get at them with a wrench, on the road. Wedge-bolts had ought to be smelled or heard from when the journals screech; not seen.

If anybody thinks he wants to slack a wedge-bolt, let that man shoot the jamb-nuts off with a gun. That's what guns is for, and they'd ought to be carried in the tool kit.

The roundhouse gang's too good for the job. New engines don't run hot soon enough to suit yours truly. Put a crew of hoboes in there and tell them they got to save oil and ram the cellar-packing down in with a pinch-bar. They will do it. The babbit and stuff you drop over the division makes good ballast.

Wall in your cellar-bolts, so if a fellow gets them out, digging babbitt out of the cellar, on a fast run, he can't get them in again inside of fifteen minutes apiece. The dispatcher won't care—ask him—and the engineer daresn't. It's all he can do to talk his way out of a lay-off.

Don't you worry about front-ends. If the engine looks good to you, but don't steam no more than a teakettle with the bottom out, let the trainmaster put on a helper once in a while. Three or five years from now somebody else will have your job anyhow, and he'll set most of your front-end furniture out on the scrap pile while he cleans house, and forget to put it back again. That will help some.

If you find there's rooms to rent in the front end after you get it done, and the heater men show up again without the incubator, fill her up with their stuff. It's hang for us fellows, but it helps hold the front trucks down when you're going some.

Bend your feed and air pipes as sharp and as often as you can. It shows that nobody was looking and they freeze up quicker.

Look out for your engine cab. Fix it so that if a fellow goes to the front door he can't get back again to the throttle without getting orders from the dispatcher, showing that the main line of the cab is clear.

The boy allows we are working too many nights at this. He wants a change. We are. So don't bother about fire-boxes and ash-pans. When the president sends word that he "couldn't see the right of way on his last trip for smoke," send him to me, and I'll tell him he was on the wrong end of the train. It was all clear ahead of the engine.

That'll make him know that we are men of some parts; part wood and part leather, with brass trimmings—which I am

Yours truly,
WILLIAM DAIDY, Engineer.

When a man has enough strength of character to get his head above the common level, however grotesquely he may at first appear, there is usually something in him worth observing. If he has balance and staying powers he may get his feet upon the solid, and a leader has been discovered.

Somewhat in this fashion the general manager reasoned as he read Bill's chapter. He called his secretary, and by careful question and reply it was soon established that neither of them knew who William Daidy was, nor what of William's chapter was fact and what fancy.

Therefore, the general manager made a brief investigation, put some pointed questions to the superintendent of motive power, who fumed a little, but electrified the master mechanic (as witness his short and simple inquiry of Bill), and thus Bill's little seeds began to grow apace.

Changes were made. Plans were devised and revised until new engines bore signs of improvement. These things were discussed on the home road, and the news of them went broadcast over many roads.

Bill's ideas bore the test of service, and flourished like the proverbial green bay tree, until finally they came before the "First Intelligence," the "Great Arcanum," or "Court of Last Resort" of the railroad mechanical world, and were called good. No longer bearing the name of "William Daidy, Engineer," it is true, but labeled with the names of many men, for that is the way of the world, and the destiny of all things that are good enough to prove good.

Bill never got beyond "Chapter One" of Ballard's "book." There was no need. But having demonstrated that he was "a man of parts," it was thought advantageous to transpose him to the ranks of those he had smitten. Thus, Bill became a road foreman of engines—and more.

Foolish Question.

A man who, with his family, had spent several weeks at a fashionable summer resort discovered one morning that he had lost his pocketbook. Thinking it possible that it might have been found by some employee of the hotel at which he was staying, he reported his loss to the landlord.

"That's too bad, Mr. Johnson," said that functionary. "I'll make inquiries about it. What kind of pocketbook was it?"

"Russia leather," answered the lodger.

"What color?"

"Dark red."

"Any distinguishing mark about it?"

"It had a clasp."

"What was the shape of it?"

"Flat, of course," said Mr. Johnson. "Haven't I been here more than a month?"

Response to Popular Demand.

"Don't you think these crook plays have a tendency to make burglars rather picturesque and popular?"

"Sure," replied Crowbar Jack. "I have been thinkin' serious of givin' up me reg'lar work an' startin' a correspondence school."

ANCIENT GOLD MINING

HOW THE TIBARENI COLLECTED THE PRECIOUS METAL.

From Their Method Originated the Legend of the Golden Fleece—Country Still Is Rich in Most Valuable Ores.

In the legend of the Golden Fleece lies hidden the record of an ancient method of the Tibareni, the sons of Tubal, for the collection of gold. The north coast of Asia Minor produced large quantities of the precious metals, as well as copper and iron. Gold was found in the gravel, as often happens still in streams draining from copper regions. The gold in copper ores, originally containing insignificant amounts of the precious metals, accumulates in the course of ages, and sometimes forms placers of astonishing richness. The ancient Tibareni washed the gold-bearing gravel, first by booming, which concentrated the gold into relatively small amounts of sand. This was then collected and washed through sluices having the bottoms lined with sheepskins. The gold would sink into the wool, while the sand would be washed away in the swift current, writes Courtenay de Kalk in the Mining Age. The skins were removed from the sluices, the coarser gold shaken out, and the fleeces, still glittering with the yellow metal, were hung upon boughs to dry so that the rest of the gold might be beaten from them and saved. The early Greek mariners, witnessing this process, carried home tales of the wonderful riches of a land where a warlike race of miners hung golden fleeces upon the trees in the grove of Ares. After so many millenniums the metalliferous country of Tubal-Cain is once more coming into prominence. The natives still cull the high-grade copper ore, and break it into smalls, which they cover with wood and roast to matte; they still work the matte in forge-like furnaces to black copper, which they ship to Alexandretta and to Euxine ports. They still make the famous carbonized iron that was celebrated as Damascus steel because it was distributed through this mart to the rest of the world after receiving a finish by local Damascene workmen. These decadent methods, that give a hint of the approved practice of the father of metallurgy, will soon became wholly extinct, for the modern miner is studying the disseminated copper ores of the Black sea coast, and threatening to rekindle on a magnificent scale the smoldering fires of Tubal-Cain.

On the Captain's Deck.

It is hard to imagine the skipper of a British man-of-war sleeping on the deck of his ship between a couple of his stokers, but this has happened in the American navy.

That teetotal navy is the most free and easy of any in the world, but this incident surprised even the American stokers.

It happened off Santiago during the blockade on Commodore Schley's flagship, Brooklyn. No lights were allowed to be shown from the ships at night, and, as this meant all portholes shut, the temperature below decks was unbearable. Every man who could slept on deck, the skipper among them.

This officer laid himself down one night on his quarterdeck to snatch a few hours' rest. He was awakened in the dawn, says the Mirror, by hearing a sleepy voice next to him murmur to a companion, "Darned if it ain't the cap'n!" And, opening his eyes, he saw two of his stokers rise up suddenly from his side and disappear swiftly for'ard.—Tit-Bits.

Encouragement From Mr. Howells.

From time to time as one advances in years, one feels obliged, by that sclerosis of the tastes which is apt to occur in old age, to abandon the world to its accumulated errors, and retire upon the superiority of the irrevocable past. At such moments it appears that there are no such novels as there once were, that fiction is not at all the thing it used to be; yet from time to time amidst the flattering despair in which one attributes to oneself a share of that vanished superiority, one has surprises of excellence in contemporary work. Some unimagined writer, hitherto quite unread, presents himself in a book perhaps unwillingly borrowed and provokes one to inquiry about the man who wrote it. He could not have written that story only; he must have done others, better or worse, and one goes on reading as many of his books as one can lay one's hands on.—William Dean Howells in the North American Review.

West Shipping by Way of Canal.

Since the Panama canal was opened there have been a few surprises, especially in the source of some of the freight shipped by that route. The Scientific American notes that a considerable proportion is coming from as far west as Ohio, being sent to New York by rail for shipment through the canal to San Francisco. As an instance of this 15,000 tons of wrought iron pipe were shipped in this way from Youngstown, O. It would have cost 65 cents a hundredweight to send it by all rail; it cost 48 cents a hundredweight by way of New York and the canal.

From Indiana canned corn is being sent to the Pacific coast through the canal and from Alabama, via New Orleans, cast iron pipe is going.